

non-waiver states. Similarly, responses of vulnerable respondents will be compared to those of non-vulnerable respondents to see the extent to which the elderly and/or disabled may have greater problems with use of EBT, and whether the introduction of customer service waivers imposes any special hardships on the elderly and disabled.

This information is needed to assist FNS as it makes decisions in the future regarding the granting of customer service waivers. No existing data source can provide all of the information needed to complete the evaluation. Computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) will be used to minimize respondent burden and interviewer error in the New EBT User Survey. Existing FSP databases from the five States will be used to construct the survey sample frame and to obtain demographic data on recipients affected by the waivers. The survey questionnaire will be kept as simple and respondent-friendly as possible. Responses are voluntary and confidential. Survey data will be combined with other data for statistical purposes and reported only in aggregate or statistical form.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this data collection is estimated to average 20 minutes per response, including time for listening to instructions and responding to questionnaire items. There is no need for respondents to gather data to respond to the questionnaire items.

Respondents: Persons in five selected EBT States who apply for food stamp benefits for the first time in November 1999, and who use their EBT card for shopping.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 1,400.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 467 hours.

Copies of the information to be collected can be obtained from William Levedahl, Food Assistance, Poverty and Well-Being Branch, Food and Rural Economics Division, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1800 M St., NW, Washington, DC 20036-5801, 202-694-5431.

Comments: Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Department, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; (d) ways to minimize the

burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, such as through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to William Levedahl, Food Assistance, Poverty and Well-Being Branch, Food and Rural Economics Division, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1800 M St., NW, Washington, DC 20036-5801, 202-694-5431. All responses to this notice will be considered and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Dated: April 21, 1999.

Betsey Kuhn,

Director, Food and Rural Economic Division.

[FR Doc. 99-11231 Filed 5-4-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-18-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency

Notice of Eligibility Criteria for Preferred Lenders

AGENCY: Farm Service Agency, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of Eligibility Criteria.

SUMMARY: This notice revises the volume requirements necessary for lenders to be eligible for the Farm Service Agency's Preferred Lender Program (PLP).

EFFECTIVE DATE: May 5, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Galen VanVleet, Senior Loan Officer, Farm Service Agency, Farm Loan Programs Loan Making Division, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, STOP 0522, Washington, DC 20250-0522, telephone (202) 720-1638; email GalenVanVleet@wdc.fsa.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Programs Affected

10.406 Farm Operating Loans

10.407 Farm Ownership Loans

Background

The PLP provides qualifying lenders additional authorities and streamlined procedures under the Agency's guaranteed farm loan program. To qualify for PLP status, lenders must meet the eligibility criteria of 7 CFR 762.106(b) and (c). Paragraph (c)(3) of this section requires lenders to have closed a minimum number of Agency guaranteed farm loans. With this notice, the Agency is setting the minimum number of loans a lender must have

closed in the past 5 years to qualify for PLP status at 20. This is a reduction from the current 30 loans in the past 3 years established by the Notice of Eligibility Criteria published in the **Federal Register** on February 12, 1999 (64 FR 7404).

Signed at Washington, DC, on April 28, 1999.

Keith Kelly,

Administrator,

Farm Service Agency.

[FR Doc. 99-11228 Filed 5-4-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Southwestern Region; Authorization of Livestock Grazing Activities on the Sacramento Grazing Allotment, Sacramento Ranger District, Lincoln National Forest, Otero County, NM

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement on a proposal to authorize livestock grazing activities on the Sacramento Grazing Allotment. The project area encompasses over 111,000 acres of National Forest lands on the Sacramento Ranger District of the Lincoln National Forest. The Sacramento Grazing Allotment comprises approximately 25% of the range district. The project has generated controversy on three main points; effects to threatened and endangered animal and plant species, concern for degraded riparian areas, and forage competition between wildlife and livestock.

DATES: The agency invites written comments and suggestions on the scope of the analysis. In addition, the agency will give notice for the full environmental analysis once it nears completion so that interested and affected people may participate and contribute to a final decision.

Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received in writing by June 15, 1999.

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement should be available for public comment in July, 1999. After considering the comments received on the proposed action, the analysis document will be modified to include any changes that result. Once updated, the Final Environmental Impact Statement should be available to the public in September 1999.